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***Former Sylvania resident convicted of conspiracy
to illegally ship guns to New York and Jamaica***

SAVANNAH: Rick Thompson, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, announced today that a federal jury convicted **JAMES EARL WIGGINS, AKA JAMES TAYLOR**, of federal firearms offenses on October 22, 2002 after a two-day trial. The trial was presided over by U.S. District Judge B. Avant Edenfield in U.S. District Court in Statesboro, Georgia.

Wiggins, age 37, an unemployed drifter who had been staying in Rochester, New York and Atlanta, was convicted on three counts of a four-count indictment. Wiggins was convicted of conspiracy to make false statements in connection with the purchase of 11 guns from Honest John's Pawn Shops in Statesboro, a federally licensed firearms dealer, conspiracy to transport firearms to New York without a license, possession of the 11 firearms after being previously convicted of a felony, and possession of the 11 firearms after being previously convicted on three occasions of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence. The case resulted from an investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms after it received a report of the multiple sale of the 11 guns, all sold to the defendant's cousin on August 11, 2001. Three of the firearms were recovered in a search

warrant in Jamaica on September 8, 2002. Jacqueline Nicholson, the recipient of the firearms, was convicted of firearms possession in Jamaica and sentenced to 145 years. Two of the firearms have been recovered in crimes involving Jamaican foreign nationals in Rochester, New York, including drug possession and attempted murder. Officers from the United States Department of State, the Statesboro Police Department, the Bulloch County Sheriff's Office, the Rochester, New York Police Department, the Monroe County, New York Sheriff's Office, and the Jamaican Constabulary Force also participated in the investigation.

Wiggins faces a maximum penalty of ten years' incarceration, a \$250,000 fine, and up to three years of supervised release. A sentencing date has not been set.

The United States was represented by United States Attorney Rick Thompson and Assistant United States Attorney Cameron Heaps Ippolito.

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